

It's Smart To Be Gallery Wise!

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

N E W S F L A S H E S

April 1 - 30

1937

EXHIBITION OF ENGLISH PAINTING: The Loan Exhibition for the month of April will be especially timely. Devoted to a survey of English Painting, it has been arranged because of the interest which is centering on the coming coronation of King George VI. The Exhibition, which has been assembled by Harold Woodbury Parsons, will open to the public on Sunday, March 28th and will continue through the month of April.

In the 16th century, with the control of England by the Tudors and especially Henry VIII, there were no local artists in the country to supply the court demand for portraits and such men as Holbein, Antonio Moro, and Marc Gheeraerts were summoned from the continent. It was inevitable that they would influence the local artists, and the first to follow their style was Nicolas Hilliard, a jeweler of Devon. His paintings are very rare, but his follower, the miniaturist Isaac Oliver (1556-1617) will be represented by a loan from the Cleveland Museum of Art, a Portrait of Sir Anthony Mildmay.

Another important 16th century painter, Hans Eworth, who was originally a Fleming, spent so much time in England, from 1545 to 1578), that he is usually considered a native artist. He will be represented by two canvases, the most important a Portrait of Queen Elizabeth, lent by Wildenstein & Company. One of the rare contemporary pictures of the Virgin Queen, it shows the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn when she was twenty-four and one year before she ascended to the throne in 1558. The painting, which is monogrammed and dated, shows Elizabeth in a black costume with the high ruff associated with her reign and her aquiline features and keenly observant eyes. Another canvas by Eworth is a Portrait of William of Somerset, the third Earl of Worcester, which is very close to Holbein in presentation and technique.

In the 17th century, England was again dependent upon Flanders for her artists, and Charles I called in Rubens not only to paint portraits, of which our Old Parr is a sample, but to decorate some of his new palaces. The favorite painter of the Stuarts was Van Dyke, and not only did he paint Charles and his children a number of times, but his Queen Henrietta Maria sat for thirty portraits to Van Dyke in the space of six years. For these, he was paid from thirty to fifty pounds. Rubens and Van Dyke are not included in the Exhibition, but their follower, Sir Peter Lely who was court painter to Charles II will be represented by the Portrait of Sir Richard Springnell from the permanent collection.

It was in the 18th century that native English painting came into its own, due primarily to the demand for portraits which inspired local artists to develop their talents. William Hogarth (1697-1764) was the first great native artist, and while he did not found the school as many critics have claimed, his portraits and genre scenes are the finest records we have of the early 18th century. He will be represented by several portraits, the most important being that of John Hamilton, lent by Miss Helen Frick of New York City. The Worcester Museum is lending a pair of portraits by Hogarth, Mr. and Mrs. James, and from the Detroit Institute of Art will come a Portrait of a Lady.

It is to Sir Joshua Reynolds that the glory of founding the English Portrait School belongs, a glory which he shares with Gainsborough. The son of a clergyman, he studied with Thomas Hudson, but the greatest influence was a trip to Italy where he copied all the old masters. In his "Discourses", he extols the work of Raphael and Michaelangelo, although his painting, in its aristocratic dignity is closer to Van Dyke. He was a keen student of techniques, always experimenting in mediums, but his greatness rests with his ability to depict the fine traits of English character. The

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Metropolitan Museum is lending a full-length Portrait of Colonel George Coussmaker, one of their finest works from this school, and from Mr. Andre de Copet will come a portrait of Miss Greenway, famous as the Napier Reynolds.

Gainsborough, less intellectual than Reynolds but with a more spontaneous brush, never left his native England and his was one of those great talents that hardly needed training. He was strongly influenced by the French painters of the same century, but replaces their worldly charm with an austere dignity and a breathless beauty that is at its best in his feminine portraits. From the Young Galleries will come the double portrait of Ladies Erne and Dillon, which has been exhibited in Glasgow, London, and in many American museums. A country man at heart, he was more at home in his landscapes, and our Repose is one of the finest from his brush, and one which he kept until his death to leave to his daughter as his most cherished possession.

Romney, who at his best approached Gainsborough, will be represented by a beautiful Lady Willoughby de Broke, lent by Knoedler and by a masterful Captain Milnes from the Seligmann Galleries. The other portrait painters of the same period, Zoffany, Opie, and Cotes, will be represented, as will the genre painters Barker, Shayer, and Morland. Several racing scenes by the Herring Family will show that very individual side of English painting.

Equally important with the portrait school and perhaps more appreciated today, are the artists who began the tradition of English landscape painting. Old Crome will be represented by an example lent from the Detroit Institute of Art and from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts will come landscapes by Constable and Bonington. The school terminated in the superb work of Turner and our Hastings Beach from his early period and the later Queen Mab's Grotto from the Cleveland Museum will show him at his best.

In connection with the paintings, an important group of English pottery lent by Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Burnap will be shown. This will include a figure of Queen Anne, plates with portraits of Charles I, William II and Queen Anne. The Bonny Prince Charlie was a romantic figure in the early 18th century and, clad in Scotch plaids, he is represented on many tea-pots, jugs, etc. There will also be shown a group of watercolours, mezzotints and engravings of the period, including works by Rowlandson, Bonington, Gainsborough, Ward, Bartolozzi, Greene and Edwards. In Gallery XVI, a group of Hogarth engravings, including the Marriage à la Mode, The Harlot's Progress, and the Cruelty Series, will demonstrate his abilities as a satirist and commentator on his times.

Mr. Parsons, to whom all thanks is due for assembling the Exhibition, will lecture on English Painting in the Auditorium on Wednesday Evening, April 7th.

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: For the month of April, Rembrandt's Hundred Guilder Print, which is being shown for the first time, will be featured as the Masterpiece.

Etched in 1649 when his powers were at their height, it is not only the finest plate from Rembrandt's hand, but is perhaps the most famous print in the whole history of engraving. Originally entitled "Christ Healing the Sick", the artist is reputed to have received one hundred guilders, about forty dollars, and an extraordinary price for that time, for an impression and the plate is often given this second title. Three states are usually listed and there is a fourth when the plate was entirely reworked by Captain Baillie in the 18th century. There are only nine impressions of the first state, and our print is of the rare second state.

It is the most important work of the artist, not only because of the technical perfection of the etching, but also because of the sincerely impressive handling of the subject. Unlike most of the Italian masters, Rembrandt has not elevated Christ, but has placed Him on the same level as the masses of people. However, He is the center of interest because He has been placed in almost the center of the plate, and all compositional lines converge on him. Here are all the elements of the greatness of Dutch painting, realism,

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staunchness, resolution, and each head is a masterly study of characterization. It is a fine impression, the delicate lines have not lost their power, and the rich depths of the background throw the main group into sharp silhouette. The easy rhythm of movement across the plate is especially successful.

LECTURES: Complementing the April Loan Show, Mr. Parsons, who arranged the exhibition, will lecture on English Painting on Wednesday Evening, April 7th at eight o'clock. There will no admission charge for this talk which will be given in Atkins Auditorium.

On Wednesday Evening, April 14th, the Director will lecture on European Porcelains. The attempt of European chemists to reproduce Chinese porcelains is a fascinating story and the result was not achieved until the 18th century. This fall Mr. Gardner visited the royal factories at Meissen where Böttger made his momentous discovery and studied the great collections there and in Dresden. The talk will be illustrated by examples from the permanent collection which includes the output of all the major manufacturers of Europe.

A series of talks on the history of American furniture will begin on Wednesday Evening, April 21st when the Director will discuss the Pilgrim Century and the Queen Anne style in America. The following Wednesday, April 28th, Mr. Gardner will consider the Chippendale style in America and in both lectures will use examples from the permanent collection.

The Gallery is open Wednesday Evenings from seven to ten and there is no charge of admission for the lectures.

PRINTS: A superb second state series of the "Prisons" by Piranesi has been installed in Gallery XVI. The exhibition is sponsored by the Print Club. There were three states to this series, of the first only three sets are known, of the second only six, including the set now on exhibition, and later there was a third state in which the plates were entirely reworked and many figures added. The series is remarkable for the size of the plates and for the feeling of light and depth that the artist has achieved. They are rare examples of prints which should be seen from a distance in order to enjoy their full power and the beauty of their composition.

FRIENDS OF ART: The membership committee is actively soliciting new members, and already a number have been added to the Society. Anyone interested should communicate with the chairman, Mrs. H. V. Jones, 823 West 55th Street.

The Wednesday morning classes will be held in the Library on April 7th and 21st at 11 o'clock, when phases of modern art will be discussed. These classes are growing in attendance and much interesting material is being studied.

The Friends of Art will find particularly interesting reading in their Art Digest which comes free with their membership. In the March 15th number there is a fine article with many illustrations of the National Academy Show in which there is some fine painting. The Manet and the Guardi Exhibition are reviewed and the comments will be interesting as our "Lina Campineanu" and our "Grand Canal" respectively have been lent to these shows and mention is also made of the Indianapolis Exhibition to which our Frans Hals has been sent. There is a criticism of the Edzard Exhibition which will interest those who have been attracted to the charming head by this artist which has been lent to the Gallery by Mrs. Gerald Parker.

GIFTS: Miss Virginia George has presented to the Gallery a collection of 19th century laces which are very much appreciated and which will augment the examples which have already been acquired permanently.

VISITORS: Monsieur Louis Carré of the Louvre in Paris visited the Gallery recently and was struck by the modern character of the building and the superb installation of the collections. He was especially interested in the School of Avignon Musical Angels and expressed an opinion that there was not a finer French Primitive in the Louvre. He found our Rembrandt the most beautiful portrait by

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by that artist he had seen in America, and felt that the Poussin and the Chardin equalled anything in Paris collections. Even the fine objects from the Oriental Collection which he had seen in London had not prepared him for the high quality of the sculptures and bronzes which he saw in the Chinese galleries.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: The advanced Marionette Class is presenting a puppet show Saturday Morning, March 27th, at 10 A.M. in the Auditorium, entitled "The Romance of Sarah Cruttenden". The idea for the play was derived from a portrait of Miss Cruttenden painted by Cotes, which hangs in the English painting gallery. The class, under the supervision of Miss Hughes, wrote the play and made and costumed the marionettes. It is based on the historical facts of the Indian uprising in Calcutta in 1756.

THE LITTLE MUSEUM FOR YOUNG MODERNS: The Little Museum for Young Moderns, whose opening exhibition of early American objects on Saturday, March 13th, marked the beginning of a new phase of juvenile activity at the Gallery, promises to hold great interest for adult friends of the Gallery as well as the "Connoisseurs" in the gallery classes.

With a staff of directors and curators, whose duties are patterned after those in a larger institution, the Little Museum is managed by the children themselves. The juvenile staff plans the exhibition; invites any friends of the gallery to lend objects for display, subject to the decision of the staff as to their suitability; installs and arranges the exhibits; spends hours in research, and is on hand on Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday evening to greet visitors and point out the high points of each exhibit.

NOTICE OF NEXT EXHIBIT: April 3rd the opening exhibit of the Little Museum will be replaced by an Oriental display. This is the first showing of the Little Museum in which the whole display will be lent by the children of the classes. There are three countries to be represented, India, China, and Japan.

MUSIC: On Sunday, April 25th at three-thirty, Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota Musical Sorority will present its regular monthly concert in the Atkins Auditorium. Featured on the program will be Mrs. W. B. McElroy, soprano, and Miss Eleanor Smith, harpist. They will be assisted by the string and vocal ensembles.

CALENDAR FOR APRIL

Wed., April 7 - 11 a.m. - Friends of Art Study Class - Library

" " - 8 p.m. - English Painting - Mr. Harold Woodbury Parsons

Wed., April 14 - 8 p.m. - European Porcelain - Mr. Paul Gardner

Wed., " 21 - 11 a.m. - Friends of Art Study Class - Library

Wed., " 21 - 8 p.m. - American Furniture of the Pilgrim Century and of the Queen Anne Style - Mr. Gardner

Sun., " 25 - 3:30 pm - Concert by Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota

Wed., " 28 - 8 p.m. - The Chippendale Style in America - Mr. Gardner

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